

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1994 KIDS COUNT DATA REPORT



Carver 93

PROFILING THE STATUS OF CHILDREN IN NORTH OAKLAND COUNTY

"EVERY KID COUNTS"



UNITED WAY OF OAKLAND COUNTY

**UNITED WAY OF OAKLAND COUNTY
KIDS COUNT PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
1994**

MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRPERSON

Catherine L. Herzog, Ph.D.
Director of Instructional Services Program
Waterford School District

Lynn Charlett, Ph.D.
Staff Psychologist
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital

Christine deLange
Executive Director
Child Abuse & Neglect Council,
County of Oakland

Renee Ison
Executive Director
Community Activities, Inc.

John S. Klemanski, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Director, MPA Program
Department of Political Science
Oakland University

Martin Orlowski, Director
Institutional Planning & Analysis
Oakland Community College
Orchard Ridge Campus

James E. Rosenfeld, Ph.D.
Project Coordinator
Oakland County Families For Kids Initiative

CONSULTANTS

Margaret A. Jones
Research Consultant
Kids Count Project

C. Michelle Piskulich, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
Oakland University

William A. Macauley, Ph.D.
Director
Public Affairs Research Laboratory
Oakland University

Terrie Katz, Affiliate
Public Affairs Research Laboratory
Oakland University

Michael Garr, Affiliate
Public Affairs Research Laboratory
Oakland University

UWOC STAFF

Michael A. Martinez
Planning Director
United Way of Oakland County

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the Kids Count project is to produce information about children in the North Oakland County communities of Auburn Hills, Brandon Township, Clarkston, Independence Township, Lake Angelus, Lake Orion, Orion Township, Ortonville, Oxford Township, Oxford, Pontiac, Sylvan Lake, and Waterford¹ as well as about aspects the environment that defines the context within which they live. Thus, the data go beyond headcounts to include information about the region's demographics, economy, educational achievements, crime, and health. The collected data are those most recently available.

Unfortunately it is not possible to collect statistics on all aspects the lives of children living in North Oakland County. Data were not always available for a specific community and either had to be omitted or reported at the county level. In either case, these instances are noted in the tables.

A unique element in this report is a compilation of a series of focus group interviews conducted in March and April of 1994 with 64 community leaders, agency personnel, and 5- to 17-year-olds in North Oakland County. Participants were asked to comment on issues of need, services available to them, and service delivery.

Finally, the intent was to provide a resource with reliable data for those individuals and groups interested in the status of children in the North Oakland County service area. For those who nod off reading tables of numbers, the text will furnish an idea of the major themes within each section. With the reader in mind, data included in the text are rounded to the nearest whole number. More precise information is available in the tables. Possible uses of this report include: extracting information needed to support grant requests from funders; defining the areas of need confronted by children in North Oakland County; isolating the gaps in service currently available; providing an overview of the environment of children in this area.

MAJOR FINDINGS

SECTION 1: Demographics and Social Conditions

- According to the 1990 Census, North Oakland County is 83% Caucasian while African-Americans (14%) comprise the largest minority group. The 1980 Census revealed a similar pattern.
- The region is bifurcated with most of the minority population residing in one city, Pontiac. All other communities are 97 to 100 percent Caucasian (U.S.

¹Waterford includes both Waterford and Waterford Township.

Census Bureau, 1990). In 1980, all communities but Pontiac and Auburn Hills were 99 to 100 percent Caucasian (U.S. Census Bureau, 1980).

- Per capita income is lowest in Pontiac at slightly less than \$10,000 and highest in Lake Angelus at over \$52,000 according to 1990 Census reports. In 1980, per capita income in North Oakland County ranged from \$7,172 in Ortonville to \$17,312 in Lake Angelus.

- Oakland County's Office of Economic Development and Planning reports that there are 63,446 children below the age of 18 in North Oakland County comprising 27% of the 1990 population of 238,171. In 1980, children represented 32 percent of the North Oakland County population.

- The same group reports that the percentage of residents under the age of 18 varies by community from a low of 19% to a high of 31%. According to 1980 Census results, the percentage of children in North Oakland communities varied from 21% to 36%.

Poverty

- The Census Bureau (1991) reports that there is a relationship between child poverty and unemployment in the United States. This underscores the benefits of a strong economy with low unemployment for children.

- Census reports for North Oakland County communities show that poverty influences local children as well. Poverty rates for families vary between 0% and 24% in North Oakland County communities. This compares to an overall poverty rate in Oakland and Wayne counties of 6 and 30 percent respectively. In 1980, the highest percentage of families in poverty was 15% and the lowest was 0%.

- Females heading households with children under the age of 5 experience higher rates of poverty than those with older children. The poverty rates for this group in North Oakland County communities varies between 0 and 69 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1991). These numbers have not changed significantly since 1980.

- The Michigan Department of Social Services reports that there were 21,166 recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children in North Oakland County in 1993. This represents a 15% increase since 1989.

Hunger

- The number of individuals receiving Food Stamps in North Oakland County has increased 25% since 1989 according to the Michigan Department of Social

Services. In December 1993 there were 12,564 Food Stamp recipients in North Oakland County communities.

- Michigan Department of Social Services records suggest that the vast majority of Food Stamp recipients reside in Pontiac.

- The Oakland Food Bank served 570,000 meals to North Oakland County children in 1993. This figure represents 20% of all meals served in Oakland County by this organization.

Homelessness

- The Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness reported in 1992 that 32% of all those sheltered in Oakland County were children.

- There was a 28% increase in the number of shelter days between 1991 and 1992 however there is no data on the number of children sheltered in 1991 (Oakland County Task Force on Homelessness).

- The task force also reported that a majority of the children sheltered in Oakland County were sheltered in the North Oakland County Community of Pontiac.

SECTION 2: Economy and Employment

Employment

- Census data show that between 1990 and 1993, average unemployment rates in North Oakland County ranged from a low of 4.7% in Sylvan Lake to a high of 17% in Pontiac.

- According to the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations report on The Economic Outlook for Oakland County in 1993-1994, Oakland County is making the transition to the service sector from manufacturing suggesting that employees will need technical skills to compete in the labor market.

- Employment in Oakland County is expected to grow at a faster pace than for Michigan as a whole but is offset somewhat by the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector (Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, 1992). Private, non-manufacturing jobs were expected to increase approximately 4% each year between 1992 and 1994 while manufacturing jobs were expected to decrease slightly more than 1% in 1994.

Day Care

- In general, available child care facilities are not able to meet the demand for child care in North Oakland County according to Oakland County's Office of Economic Development.
- Child care is offered in different settings but total capacity across types of facilities is 6075 children (Oakland County Community Co-ordinated Child Care).

SECTION 3: Education

- The seven school districts in North Oakland County--Avondale, Brandon, Clarkston, Lake Orion, Oxford, Pontiac, and Waterford--have a combined enrollment of 44,986 or 25% of the total enrollment for Oakland County (Oakland County Intermediate School District, 1994).
- The enrollments in North Oakland County have increased by 24% since 1990 (Oakland County Intermediate School District, 1994).
- The Oakland County Intermediate School District reports that North Oakland County school districts will benefit from the guaranteed \$4200/per pupil expenditure by the state. Some districts will need to renew millages to maintain per pupil spending at 1993-94 levels.
- The Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests the overall performance of students in mathematics, reading and science. North Oakland County scores varied by school district and grade level in both the 1992-93 and 1993-94 school years. Many, though not all, scores improved in this one year period (Oakland County Intermediate School District).
- Pontiac schools had the lowest percentage of students achieve a satisfactory rating of any district across all grade levels and subjects (Oakland County Intermediate School District).
- According to the Michigan Department of Education, dropout rates have declined in most North Oakland County communities from 1981-82 levels. Rates for the 1991-92 school year ranged from less than 2% in Avondale and Oxford school districts to nearly 9% in the Pontiac School District. The average rate for North Oakland County school districts in 1991-92 was 4.3%.

Special Education

- The Division of Special Education, Oakland County Schools, reports that nearly 11% of students are enrolled in a special education program but North Oakland County students comprise 29% of the special education population.
- Special Education enrollments are expected to increase through 1997 (Division of Special Education, Oakland County Schools).
- The Pontiac and Waterford school districts had the highest percentage of students enrolled in special education in 1992 (15%) according to the Division of Special Education. Lake Orion Schools had the lowest special education enrollment in North Oakland County at 9%.

SECTION 4: Violence and Crime

- The Michigan State Police report that there were 6869 index arrests in 1992, including murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and arson in Oakland County. There were 6886 such arrests in 1991.
- Non-index arrests covering crimes such as vandalism, prostitution, and disorderly conduct, rose 31% in the same period (Michigan State Police).
- Incomplete data are available for arrests of children in North Oakland County. Based upon statistics collected by the Michigan State Police, there were 564 offenses and arrests of juveniles age 16 and under in 1992 accounting for approximately 8% of the total number of offenses and arrests.
- Sylvan Lake had no reported offenses and arrests for children age 16 and under. Waterford had the highest offense and arrest rate at 11% and was followed closely by Auburn Hills (Michigan State Police).

Probate Court

- Most of the information from the Probate Court Service Statistics is available only for Oakland County as a whole. Most of these statistics do not trend upward; rather they vary from year to year. For example, the number of juvenile jury trials in Oakland County has varied between 22 and 42 since 1988. There were 435 neglect cases handled by the court in 1993 down from a high of 507 in 1991. Delinquency cases also have declined since 1991 from 5097 to 4916.
- Alternatively, Youth Assistance cases handled in Oakland County have

increased steadily since 1989 (Probate Court Service Statistics).

- In 1993, juvenile referrals for North Oakland County school districts accounted for 35% of all juvenile referrals for Oakland County. The Probate Court Service Statistics report that the Pontiac school district accounted for 55% of all North Oakland County juvenile referrals to Probate Court.

- Overall, juvenile referrals were lower in 1993 than in 1992 (Probate Court Service Statistics).

SECTION 5: Health

Infant Mortality/Teen Pregnancy

- The infant mortality rate for North Oakland County averaged nearly 12 deaths per 1000 births over three years. In Oakland County, the rate was slightly less than 8 deaths per thousand births during the same period (Michigan Department of Public Health).

- Infant mortality rates in North Oakland County in 1992 for Brandon Township, Orion Township, Oxford Township, Pontiac, and Waterford were up compared to 1990. However, except for Pontiac and Waterford, North Oakland County communities have fewer than 5 infant deaths annually making the mortality rate calculation unreliable (Michigan Department of Public Health).

- The infant mortality rate was highest in Pontiac where nearly 18 deaths occur for every 1000 births. This rate was lower than in 1991 (23.1) but higher than in 1990 when there were 13.3 deaths per thousand live births (Michigan Department of Public Health).

- According to the Michigan Department of Public Health, births to teen mothers accounted for 14% of all births in North Oakland County between 1990 and 1992. There were 44 live births to mothers age 15 in these years.

Substance Abuse

- Data regarding substance abuse were not available by community therefore Oakland County data for publicly funded programs were used.

- A striking statistic is the percentage reporting in 1992-1993 that their first incidence of drug use occurred when they were age 10 or under, 6% (Oakland County Michigan Health Division). This is an increase from 1988-1989 when the

slightly under 5% reported using drugs the first time before age 10 but a decrease from 1991-1992.

- 61% reported being under the age of 18 when they first used drugs (Oakland County Michigan Health Division). In 1988-1989 nearly 64% of participants in publicly funded drug programs reported using drugs before they reached 18.
- Treatment admissions suggest that there is a significant lag between the first experience with drugs and seeking help. Children under the age of 18 accounted for only 5% of all admissions for treatment in 1992-1993 down from 6% in 1988-1989 (Oakland County Michigan Health Division).
- Information about the primary drug being used at admission to a treatment program is not available for children. However, the overwhelming majority (59%) of all admissions were for alcohol abuse in 1992-1993. This is down from 1990-1991 when nearly 70% of admissions were for alcohol abuse. Cocaine was the most frequently reported reason for admission among controlled substance abusers between 1988 and 1993. (Oakland County Michigan Health Division).
- Admissions for heroin use jumped in 1992-1993 to nearly 13% from less than 6 percent the previous year (Oakland County Michigan Health Division).

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Statistics for North Oakland County alone are not available. Yet this is an important health issue for children because the Centers for Disease Control reports that most people who are HIV positive in their 20s actually contracted the disease in their teens.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control, Michigan reported 94 AIDS cases for children under the age of 19 in 1993 comprising approximately 2% of the total AIDS caseload in the state.
- The Oakland County Health Division reports 278 cases of either Gonorrhea or Syphilis among children under age 20 in 1994. The vast majority of reported cases are for Gonorrhea (276); children comprise 25% of the Gonorrhea caseload in the County.
- A rough estimate of AIDS cases in North Oakland County can be calculated by finding the percentage of children in Michigan suffering from the AIDS virus and multiplying by the number of children in North Oakland County. Using this method, there are approximately 2.4 children suffering from AIDS in this area.

- Nationally, 71% of all 12th graders reported having sexual intercourse while 40% of all 9th graders reported the same (Centers for Disease Control).

Mental Health

- The Child Adolescent Clinic in Pontiac reported 609 open cases in 1991-1992 down somewhat from the 717 open cases reported in 1990-1991.
- Pontiac accounted for 40% of all Child Adolescent Clinic cases in 1990-1991 and 38% in 1991-1992.
- 64% of the Child Adolescent Clinic's clients were male while 35% were female.

SECTION 6: Child Abuse and Neglect

- Child abuse referrals received by the Department of Social Services in Oakland County have decreased by 7.5% since 1992.
- The substantiation rate of neglect and abuse cases has decreased from 30% in 1990 to 18% in 1993 according to the Michigan Department of Social Services. This decrease is the result of a change in department policy regarding perpetrator due process notification that took effect in 1993.
- Between October 1 and December 31, 1993, there were 973 complaints filed with Child Protective Services at the Perry Street and Saginaw Street facilities in Pontiac. Assuming the 4th quarter of the year is similar to other quarters, an estimate of the number of complaints for these two locations is 3892 (Oakland County Department of Social Services).
- The Michigan Department of Social Services reported 1,181 unduplicated victims of child abuse or neglect down from 1,958 the previous year in 1993.
- Child sexual abuse in Oakland County decreased from 258 cases reported in 1992 to 152 cases reported in 1993 according to the Michigan Department of Social Services. The vast majority of children experiencing sexual abuse were victims of molestation (116).
- Physical neglect was the most common type of abuse or neglect reported to Department of Social Services accounting for 36% of all cases reported in 1992 and 1993. Social neglect and physical injury respectively were the second and third most frequently reported types of abuse and neglect reported by victims of child abuse between 1990 and 1993 (Michigan Department of Social Services).

- Parents living in the home accounted for 77% of all cases of abuse or neglect (Oakland County Department of Social Services).
- The vast majority of children in the care of Oakland County's Department of Social Services were living in a foster home. Adoptions accounted for only 3% of the total (Oakland County Department of Social Services).

SECTION 7: FOCUS GROUPS

- Seven focus groups were convened by members of the Public Affairs Research Laboratory. The 64 individuals participating in these groups were divided as follows: 9 community leaders; 16 agency personnel (two groups of 8 each); 11 children ages 5-7; 11 children ages 8-10; 12 children ages 11-13; and 5 children ages 14-17. The following findings represent major themes discussed in the groups but cannot be interpreted as representing the views and attitudes of all individuals within groups.
- The community leaders and agency personnel participating in the focus groups support more prevention and early intervention services and believe they can be cost-effective (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).
- The agency personnel focus groups reported a need for comprehensive, collaborative service delivery rather than the patchwork system now available (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).
- The need for support services like transportation and child care to allow potential recipients to participate was mentioned specifically by agency personnel and indirectly by the 36, 5- to 17-year-olds participating (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).
- Gaps in services currently available to North Oakland County residents include: service to children over 10 years of age, service to girls ages 5-7, service to individuals in extreme North Oakland County, after school and summertime programs, peer counseling, mental health, and language translation (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).
- A decentralized, non-bureaucratic approach to service delivery and client-centered advocacy and services is needed (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).
- The safety of children was a theme throughout the focus groups and the need to protect children from violence and gangs and to promote conflict resolution (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).

●The 16 agency personnel participating felt the need to be more proactive than reactive and have a better understanding of what they are doing. They can be more proactive through improved marketing and they can improve knowledge of their accomplishments through program evaluation (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).

●Some participants thought the mission of schools may need to be broadened beyond institutions of education to include human services and health. Cooperation and collaboration between schools and non-profits would be beneficial to both (Public Affairs Research Laboratory, Oakland University, 1994).